

Discussing Job Performance Problems with an Employee

Don't

- Don't apologize for discussing unsatisfactory work performance.
- Don't speculate, diagnose or engage in discussion about a personal problem or the reasons causing it. Stay focused on evaluating work performance
- Don't moralize, place value judgment, or become punitive regarding the problem.
- Don't discuss suspicion of drinking or drug use with the employee unless it occurs in direct violation of personnel policy, such as on the job or while the employee is functioning in a job-related capacity.

Do

- Meet with the employee in a private setting. If concern for a threat exists, take all necessary security precautions, in line with policy and procedure.
- Stay calm. You may need to deal with a range of reactions that may be expressed, including anger, resentment, defensiveness, sadness and indifference.
- Have your documentation organized and readily available.
- Discuss how work can be improved, and clearly communicate expectations, objectives, goals and timelines for improvement.
- Allow the employee the opportunity to respond, preserving dignity and self-esteem
- Ask the employee what s/he will do differently to accomplish performance goals, and agree on a clear action plan
- When making a referral to the EAP, refer the employee according to the plan laid that has already been agreed upon between you and the EAP Coordinator.
- Schedule a follow-up meeting to discuss progress regarding specific goals. Provide feedback toward these goals regularly.
- **NOTE: Non-Management employees have a right to have a Union Representative present during the meeting.**
- **The “Sometimes” Speech: An example of how to present a referral to the EAP to an employee. “Sometimes job problems like these are the result of things going on outside the workplace. It may not be true in your case, and it’s really not my business. However, because it’s true sometimes, the unions and the City have the Employee Assistance Program. It’s free and confidential.**